

proud to celebrate Wanda's life and recognize her many contributions to our community.

My friend, Wanda, will be missed.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MRS. MARY WOODRUFF

(Mr. CLINE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CLINE. Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to recognize Mrs. Mary Woodruff of Amherst County, Virginia, who turned 104 years young last week.

Born and raised in Amherst, Mrs. Woodruff and her husband of 63 years built their iconic country store in 1952 with their own two hands, near the site where Mary's grandfather opened the first Black-owned business in the county.

For decades they served their community, providing groceries to locals and gas to travelers, all while raising five children and several foster children in the apartment above the store.

This multigenerational family business was reinvented as Woodruff's Cafe and Pie Shop by Mary's youngest daughter, Angela Scott, in 1998. Since then, business has been booming, attracting patrons from far and wide to try their delicious pies, including a visit from Al Roker from the "Today" show last year.

To this day, nearly 70 years after opening the country store's doors, the 104-year-old Mary Woodruff still works at the shop and "holds court" at the back table where she greets customers and tells stories. Mrs. Woodruff, her family, and the pies are truly a blessing to our central Virginia community.

I wish Mrs. Woodruff a very happy birthday, and I look forward to stopping by the shop sometime soon.

HOLDING FOREIGN COMPANIES ACCOUNTABLE

(Mr. BARR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARR. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of S. 945, the Holding Foreign Companies Accountable Act.

The United States has the most robust, liquid, and advanced capital markets in the world. Companies from around the globe flock to the U.S. capital markets to fund their businesses.

However, to participate in our markets, companies need to play by our rules, and Chinese firms listed on American exchanges are the worst and most frequent violators of the rules.

Gone are the days when we can sit idly by and let Chinese firms, many with strong ties to the Chinese Communist Party, participate in our markets at the expense of protection for everyday investors.

Most publicly traded firms are audited by public accounting firms which,

in turn, are overseen by the PCAOB. This gives investors confidence that the books are accurate. China, however, refuses to let the PCAOB review its auditors.

The results are that investors lack confidence in the validity and reliability of a company's financial data. Worse, thousands of investors are defrauded. And the worst case scenario, American savers are funding Chinese state-owned enterprises which are fueling China's civil-military fusion and, in some cases, directly financing China's military space and cyberspace buildup, threatening U.S. national security.

As a member of the China Task Force, I strongly support this legislation. I urge this body to pass it. And we can no longer allow China to take advantage of our rules and defraud our investors.

CELEBRATING BETTY AND ELLINGTON PEEK'S 70TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Madam Speaker, on Thanksgiving Day this year, Betty and Ellington Peek were also celebrating something else, their 70th wedding anniversary.

After meeting at a dance in 1950, Betty and Ellington got married and moved to Oakdale, California, which is a well-known ranching and rodeo town south of Sacramento.

Shortly after that, Ellington was drafted for the Korean war and he served in our military for 1 year. He came home to Betty and their first son, Andy, who was born while he was overseas. They lived in both Susanville and then later the Cottonwood/Anderson area, running auction yards for cattle until Ellington was finally able to live the dream and buy the Shasta Auction Yard that he had worked at for so many years.

For over 30 years, Ellington and Betty have been staples, not just in their Shasta County livestock community, but all northern California with their innovative way of doing business, helping ranchers from across the country sell their cattle via satellite and on the internet.

Through hard work and a strong bond, the Peeks have found great success in livestock, but even greater success in marriage and family and their long list of friends, of which I count myself, and am proud to do so.

So Betty and Ellington, happy 70th anniversary. I wish you continued happiness for many years to come. You are pillars of our community. We are proud of you.

AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. FLETCHER). Under the Speaker's an-

nounced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FORTENBERRY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Madam Speaker, when I was about 8 years old, I read a book. It was on a famous New York Yankee first baseman named Lou Gehrig. He was nicknamed "The Iron Horse" because of his great athletic ability. He could hit, he could field. His durability was legendary. As a great athlete, his character was marked by that ability to adjust and overcome.

But then something happened. Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis caused Lou Gehrig to lose control of his bodily functions. That famous durability of his was mocked by this cruel, unforgiving, neurodegenerative disease, which is aggressive, that we now know as ALS. There was no cure then and there is no cure now. ALS has also come to be known as Lou Gehrig's disease.

But before he died in 1941, Madam Speaker, at a ceremony at the home plate in Yankee Stadium, Lou Gehrig looked up at the crowd and he said:

For the past 2 weeks, you've been reading about a bad break. Yet today, I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the Earth.

That story, Lou Gehrig's story, stayed with me as a child.

Now, Madam Speaker, as a Member of the United States Congress, fast forward decades later. This same cruel disease has swept upon my own family and we, as a family, quickly learned about the profound trauma it has caused so many other Americans.

ALS takes about 2 to 5 years to destroy a body and exhaust a family. It is 100 percent fatal. Its victims lose the ability to write and walk and talk and eat and move and, finally, to breathe.

Earlier this year, several hundred persons deeply affected from ALS, along with their courageous caregivers and friends, joined me and another Member of Congress on the other side of this body to discuss a legislative initiative.

We are all now really familiar with Zoom calls, and on that particular Zoom call, on the little chat box on the side of the screen, one kind person said: "I wish all of America could hear this constructive conversation between Members of Congress."

Madam Speaker, we are in the midst of a horrific pandemic. COVID-19 has become a daily reminder of our fragility and mortality. It is an urgent health crisis, and scientists and government regulators worldwide are responding to this urgency, as are we, by accelerating the testing and improving approval processes for treatments and vaccines.

I recently discussed these dynamics with our Food and Drug Administration Commissioner, Dr. Stephen Hahn, who was optimistic that we may just be able to put this pandemic behind us by early summer.

So, Madam Speaker, I divert for a moment because I want to applaud the

speedy success in getting vaccines quickly and safely approved, and I am hopeful for their swift delivery to those most in need.

But as we continue to fight our way through this global pandemic, imagine for a moment that we could harness that same determination and goodwill to rethink how we fight numerous other diseases.

Madam Speaker, in over 50 years, there have been 50 clinical trials for ALS. ALS patients have submitted themselves to these tests in accordance with the rules of the current regulatory framework. Many of them received placebo therapies. All of them stopped receiving treatment when the trials were done, even if the therapies were affording some relief. They sacrificed their lives to science, then they quietly and gradually weakened and died.

As we all know, drug trials can drag on for a decade or longer. Most ALS victims do not live that long. This overly deliberate regulatory process does not match the urgency of the disease. It is not saving lives; it is killing hope.

Madam Speaker, when a process isn't working, it is time to change the process.

So, I am proud of something, Madam Speaker. We have a new bill. It is bipartisan and it is bicameral. The House and the Senate are working together on this. It is called Accelerating Access to Critical Therapies for ALS. Let me put it another way; it is called ACT for ALS. It accelerates access for patients with rapidly progressing diseases toward investigational treatments through a new public-private program coordinated by the Department of Health and Human Services.

The bill provides expanded access to promising therapies through public-private funding, so that more patients suffering terminal diseases, like ALS, can access potentially life-extending therapy. It also works toward a more consistent and streamlined review of drug applications.

ACT for ALS is just a beginning effort to make the regulatory and research establishment more responsive to patients suffering right now. It does so by attacking and correcting the injustices and inequities at the core of our drug development and healthcare systems.

It is nobody's fault. We set up a research paradigm. We set up a regulatory process in order to try to give order to the process of helping people. But it is now time to reexamine some fundamental premises, particularly in this disease category and others.

Currently, our ACT for ALS has 217 cosponsors, nearly half this body, more and more every day.

Key to this effort, Madam Speaker, have been the many, many courageous ALS survivors who are advocating for this bill.

Now, one of those is 36-year-old Mayuri Saxena.

I want to show you something, Madam Speaker. Four years ago, Mayuri was diagnosed with ALS and today she can no longer stand or walk, use her legs or arms, swallow without help, and she cannot speak.

But let's go back to that earlier point I made about Lou Gehrig's durability. This is Mayuri's mind. By communicating with her eyes and telling an artist what she saw, she imagined this beautiful painting.

□ 1945

I wanted to first bring it up here because it is quite extraordinary. You could apply it to so many lessons around here, Madam Speaker. The symbols of our two political parties, the elephant and the donkey, are chaining themselves to someone in need with the hope of our great country, our symbol, transcending above.

Mayuri sees that as her hope and America's hope. I have never seen something so beautifully and eloquently expressed as a call for these Washington words that we use, like bipartisanship. It is simply a call to care and to compassion and to be smart.

This act is well-researched. We have gotten technical assistance from the Food and Drug Administration, as well as the National Institutes of Health. We have worked with those who are representing and advocating for new movement to figure out the right set of processes by which we again can establish a new procedure inside the Department of Health and Human Services and expanded access to treatments. We can do this. As we are rushing to the end of the year, we have got a lot of problems, and we have very few days to solve them. But let's solve this one.

Madam Speaker, ALS affects 30,000 Americans, 6,000 of whom will die every year from the disease. One in six of those, by the way, Madam Speaker, is a veteran. One such veteran is Pat Quinn, by whom our country, through his effort, was socialized and embraced this Ice Bucket Challenge. He thought of that in order to raise global awareness of the brutality of the disease. Pat Quinn just recently died.

Madam Speaker, it has been 75 years since Lou Gehrig himself died. There is still no cure, though there are some now promising therapies and drugs. Again, the ACT for ALS would allow expanded access now to those promising therapies and drugs.

Madam Speaker, I have met so many beautiful people who have come to my office to explain their own journey with ALS. These are people of good heart. They are courageous, they are fighters, and they have created a network of solidarity trying to rethink more creatively as to how to attack through sound science the underlying disease. They represent a movement that has a strong desire for the right type of science and a real hope to stop the suffering.

Madam Speaker, COVID-19 has shown us one thing: we can act quickly

if we want to. We can act quickly if we are determined.

I think it is time to apply those lessons to diseases that have silently killed so many for so long. We can create, and we have to create, a more humane response and a responsive system for those in need. Especially for diseases like this, where the time is so narrow.

Madam Speaker, about 4 years ago now, a young man in his thirties was diagnosed with this disease. He noticed his hand trembling. He went through a battery of tests, but the moment he noticed that, he knew—for whatever reason he knew—in his heart of hearts it was the worst case scenario. He knew it was ALS. I don't know how he knew, he just knew. He and his wife struggled and hoped that it would be something else that they could possibly live with. But he died this spring, about 4 years after he contracted the disease, leaving behind his wife and his four little children. His name is Joe Gregory. He is my wife's little brother.

Madam Speaker, for Joe, for the artist, for the imaginative artistry of Mayuri, for the memory of Lou Gehrig and Pat Quinn, and for all of those who are still suffering from this cruel, relentless, and unforgiving disease, let's make hope real. Let's work to get this done.

As I said, I have worked and seen so many beautiful people, some of whom have expressed to our office that their wish on their deathbed, communicated through their families, was that this act would pass. When I reflect on that, Madam Speaker, again, we have got numerous other problems here. We have to get a budget done, we have to avoid a government shutdown, and we probably ought to come together on a new COVID-type relief package. I am working on that, too.

But how could I not speak?

Why did I read a book on Lou Gehrig when I was 8 years old that stayed with me all these years?

I don't know.

But how could I not speak on behalf of these beautiful people who just want us to do the right thing, not out of anger and not out of protest, but out of solidarity to show that we can get things done because we care?

When we act with our will and resolve, we can help.

Madam Speaker, one more thing before I leave, I keep reflecting on those words of Lou Gehrig. I don't suffer from ALS. I don't pretend to know the profound difficulty that causes in those individuals' hearts, but I can say this: I believe that I am also the luckiest man alive because I get to stand with people like this and try to help.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for listening, and I yield back the balance of my time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to: